

EDITORIAL/OPINION

Who supports the sales tax?

"The major clamor has occurred in this building [the State Capitol], on the editorial pages, and in the board rooms of the state," Representative Larry Hill said of the sales tax. As he noted, there has been no public outcry for a sales tax.

As of today, it looks like a sales tax will appear on the ballot—in a special election to be held in March. The so-called liberal Democrats, including Tom Throop, Grattan Kerans, Barbara Roberts, Vera Katz, etc., have pushed it through the House once again and they, along with Senate Democrats and Governor Atiyeh, finally bulldozed it through the Senate over Senate President Ed Fadeley's opposition.

The proposed 4 percent sales tax would raise approximately \$685.6 million in the remaining 13 months of the 1983-1985 biennium, becoming effective on June 1, 1984. It would reduce tax on all types of property—residential, commercial, industrial, etc.—by about 39 percent. While the homeowner now assessed \$1,000 in property tax will save about \$390, the major corporations with taxes assessed at \$1 million will save \$390,000.

The ordinary homeowner who spends nearly all of his money in Oregon will pay 4 percent on his expenditures, excluding food, drugs and medical care. When he spends \$10,000 on clothing, furniture, a car, school supplies, tuition, shoes, restaurant meals, gifts, newspapers and magazines, theater or game tickets, and any other expenditures, his taxes will have equaled the amount he saved from his property tax.

The large corporations are another matter: their largest expenditure, depending on the nature of the business, is on wages (no sales tax) and on materials and supplies, often purchased out of state.

It is not difficult to see why the clamor for a sales tax came from the board rooms of the giant corporations and the editorial pages of the newspaper chains. A survey of campaign contributions should reveal why it also came from the Capitol Building.

The Legislative leaders are anxious to put a limit on state spending. Perhaps they could obtain a voluntary pledge by the supporters of the sales tax on the amount of money that will be used to try to cram it down the voters' throats.

The tipping-point?

When Robert Blanchard was in town we used to hear a lot about the "tipping point." It was his theory that when a school became 35 percent Black—or in some cases 25 percent—the white students would leave and the school would become all-Black, or worse, empty.

As calmer heads prevailed, that theory and its accompanying discriminatory regulations were removed from school district policy and no one is too worried about the all-Black schools that never happened.

The "tipping point" theory is again being promulgated in the community, this time to fight low-income housing. The Eliot Neighborhood Improvement Association is using the City policy against concentration of subsidized housing to fight the development of housing for the handicapped between Union and Seventh Avenue. The neighborhood now has 20 percent subsidized housing and they fear that 25 percent (or 35 percent?) could be the tipping-point which brings white flight.

This brings out several unanswered questions this community has dealt with for many years:

a) As older Black people die or go to nursing homes, their homes are sold. In the current economy home-buying is pretty well restricted to the middle- and upper-income people. This fact, combined with high unemployment of Blacks, has brought an influx of young, white middle class families into the Eliot neighborhood—replacing the elderly Black residents who have lived there for years.

b) Federal and local policies calling for scattering of low-income subsidized housing were established to help the low-income person integrate into the community, not to protect communities against low-income people. Is concentration of low-income people—which in this community generally means concentration of low-income Black people—in an area detrimental to the community?

c) Should low-income housing for families and especially for the elderly be provided in the community where they have lived, where they have social and family ties? Or should they be sent to other parts of town solely to avoid concentration of poor black people in an area?

Exclusivity has not been a characteristic of Black people. They have welcomed all and especially the poor and the oppressed.

We do not believe the addition of handicapped residents of 30 units will be detrimental to the community and it might even have some benefits. We do not see opposition from the Black residents of the area. We believe the City hearings officer's compromise—zoning the area R-2 and restricting it to either the planned projects or low density housing—is proper and should be acceptable to all.

The decision to oppose the project was made almost exclusively by white residents. The Eliot Neighborhood Improvement Association must find a way to bring the old-time residents of the Neighborhood—and especially the Black residents—into the planning and decision-making for their community.

Letters to the Editor

Stop private utility charge to ratepayers

To the editor:

In 1978 Oregon voters passed Ballot Measure 9 overwhelmingly with the intent of prohibiting PGE and PP&L from ever charging ratepayers for the costs of uncompleted and abandoned projects. I was the chief sponsor and campaign director for Ballot Measure 9.

PGE and PP&L have never accepted the voters' decision. First, through secret meetings with Oregon legislators and then working hand-in-hand with the Public Utility Commissioner they have tried to channel the costs of the defunct Pebble Springs project to their ratepayers through a device known as a "debt-equity swap," which is currently being challenged in court by Forelows on Board and the Coalition for Safe Power. PGE has also run into trouble with the Bonneville Power Administration by improperly including the Pebble Springs debt

in the high-cost power they have exchanged with Bonneville for low-cost power.

Unfortunately for PGE and PP&L investors, more bad debt looms in the termination of the Skagit project which was to be built on the Hanford Reservation in Washington. PGE has invested \$126 million and PP&L \$89 million in that one project, which has not proceeded because of regional energy surpluses.

Unwilling to let their investors take a loss (they took the risk), PGE and PP&L have asked Public Utility Commissioner John Lobdell for a declaratory ruling that would permit them to charge their ratepayers for their abandoned investments and in effect administratively overturn the mandate of Oregon voters when they passed Ballot Measure 9.

As chief sponsor of Ballot Measure 9 I have intervened in opposition to the PGE and PP&L request

(PUC CASE UM-13) joined by Forelows on Board, Coalition for Safe Power, and U.S. Representative Jim Weaver. Oregonians who don't want to pay for unfinished and abandoned utility projects should write Public Utility Commissioner John Lobdell, Labor & Industries Bldg., Salem, Oregon 97310 to object and support Ballot Measure 9.

Although I have intervened in this PUC proceeding, it is clearly illegal. The whole intent of Ballot Measure 9 was to prevent exactly what PGE and PP&L are asking. Oregonians should never have to pay for the utilities' bad investments and power they will never receive.

In our free enterprise system, the investors take the risks, the profits and the losses. Bailing out these Fortune 500 monopolies is lemon socialism of the worst kind.

Dave McTeague

Portland Observer

The Portland Observer (USPS 959-680) is published every Thursday by Exile Publishing Company, Inc., 2201 North Killingsworth, Portland, Oregon 97217, Post Office Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208. Second class postage paid at Portland, Oregon.

The Portland Observer was established in 1970.

Subscriptions: \$15.00 per year in the Tri-County area. Postmaster: Send address changes to the Portland Observer, P.O. Box 3137, Portland, Oregon 97208.

283-2486



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THE SOVIETS ARE USING CHEMICAL WEAPONS IN AFGHANISTAN...

AND WAGING BIOLOGICAL WARFARE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA



Prosecute the Klan

by Dr. Manning Marable

The most dangerous yet seldom noticed aspect of Reaganism is the overall political climate it establishes for racism and violence.

Reagan's brutal disregard for public housing and health care, his bellicose statements attacking human needs spending, and his open contempt for civil rights, clearly set a national tone for racist vigilante violence against Blacks, Jews and other national minorities. The evidence is clear enough. Since the late 1970s, according to the National Anti-Klan Network, nearly 500 cases of Ku Klux Klan terror and murders have been documented. Five hundred more instances of anti-Semitic and anti-Black violence have been recorded—not counting other forms of brutality, such as police violence.

Only a few recent examples, collected by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, the Anti-Klan Network and Atlanta activist Imani Clairbone, are sufficient to illustrate the problem.

On May 1, 1981, Robert L. Henderson, a Black Pennsylvania resident, was abducted at gunpoint by three white males. After undressing him, he was taken to a junkyard where the racists tried to lynch him from a crane from his rectum. Failing at this, they then forced a metal pipe seven inches long and four inches wide into Henderson's rectum. The Black man had to undergo surgery and was long under intensive care after the incident.

On March 10, 1982, a Jewish female student at the University of Maryland/College Park was shot five times with a BB gun on campus.

Her attacker yelled "Heil Hitler" and other anti-Semitic epithets while he shot her. An underground campus newspaper surfaced after the shooting, hailing the racist as a hero and suggesting that "next time he use a flamethrower" on the victim.

On May 4, 1982, five white Colorado males were arrested for plotting to execute two Federal judges and bomb the Denver Internal Service officer. One of those arrested was the local Klan president, and other would-be vigilantes had Klan connections.

Obviously, the President has attempted to distance himself from these crude manifestations of his own political philosophy. In a brief introduction to a U.S. Civil Rights Commission's report, "Intimidation and Violence: Racial and Religious Bigotry," Reagan denounced racist violence, but in a very limited and faulty manner. "A few isolated groups in the backwaters of American life," he stated, "still hold perverted notions of what America is all about." The statement above is unsatisfactory in at least two respects. First, racist violence is a normal and indeed integral aspect of any institutionally racist social order. Second, there is a direct correlation between the emergence of Klan and racist brutality with unemployment and rising ethnic hostility, a cultural and political environment which Reaganism deliberately provokes.

How do we effectively combat racist violence? Most civil rights experts concur that no new legislation is needed to place the most dangerous racists behind bars. As the National Anti-Klan Network's Coor-

ordinator, Lynn Wells, and National Chair Rev. C.T. Vivian note, laws adopted during the 1860s which targeted the post-Civil War Klan are still on the books. These federal "Anti-Klan Statutes" read in part: "Conspiracy Against Rights of Citizens: If two or more persons conspire to injure, oppress, threaten, or intimidate any citizen in the free exercise or enjoyment of any right or privilege secured to him by the Constitution or laws of the United States... If two or more persons go in disguise on the highway, or on the premises of another, with intent to prevent or hinder his free exercise or enjoyment of any right," they are subject to Federal prosecution.

Reagan's Attorney General, William French Smith, claims that virtually all of the recent cases of racist violence fall outside of Federal jurisdiction—in direct contradiction to Federal law. The U.S. Justice Department has prosecuted barely two dozen cases—and the carnage and terror continues.

Early this year, the National Anti-Klan Network launched an ambitious educational and political campaign to force the Reaganites to enforce the Anti-Klan Statutes. The Network, Klanwatch, the SCLC, and other civil rights agencies involved in anti-racist work merit our financial and political support. We must elevate the demand for Federal enforcement of Anti-Klan laws into a major issue in next year's election. But in our long-term task to isolate and ultimately destroy Klan and all racist violence, we must have a correct understanding of the organic links between economics, politics and white supremacy.

Eliot housing decision

(Continued from page 1 column 6)

Committee that a San Francisco development they had praised as the type Eliot should seek is also a subsidized project, "but for \$18,000-\$20,000 a year people, rather than the handicapped." He said the issue has nothing to do with the handicapped, but with the cost of land. "Only because they are asking for a zone change is the Neighborhood involved." Otherwise, they can build anywhere they choose.

Ted Wainright, a former resident and now a landlord, favors the project. "When Emanuel ripped out houses, the freeway took away neighborhoods, it destroyed the economic base. I'm in favor of bringing payrolls, people." He said one man involved with the Land Use Com-

mittee decision had told him the people would be "transients," here for a little while. "I thought maybe it wasn't a good idea, but then, if it was someone who belongs to me I would be happy for them."

This statement was met with hostility and the epithet "absentee landlord." Even more anger was expressed when in the name of "democracy" he said the people living in the neighborhood should make the decision. "This is a mostly Black neighborhood. Where are the Blacks? I would like to know what they want."

Following the vote to appeal to the City Council, Bob Russell said, "That's were democracy sets in." Everyone can testify and those on the "sign-in" sheet will be notified.

The Observer welcomes Letters to the Editor. Letters should be short, and must contain the writer's name and address (addresses are not printed). The Observer reserves the right to edit for length.

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